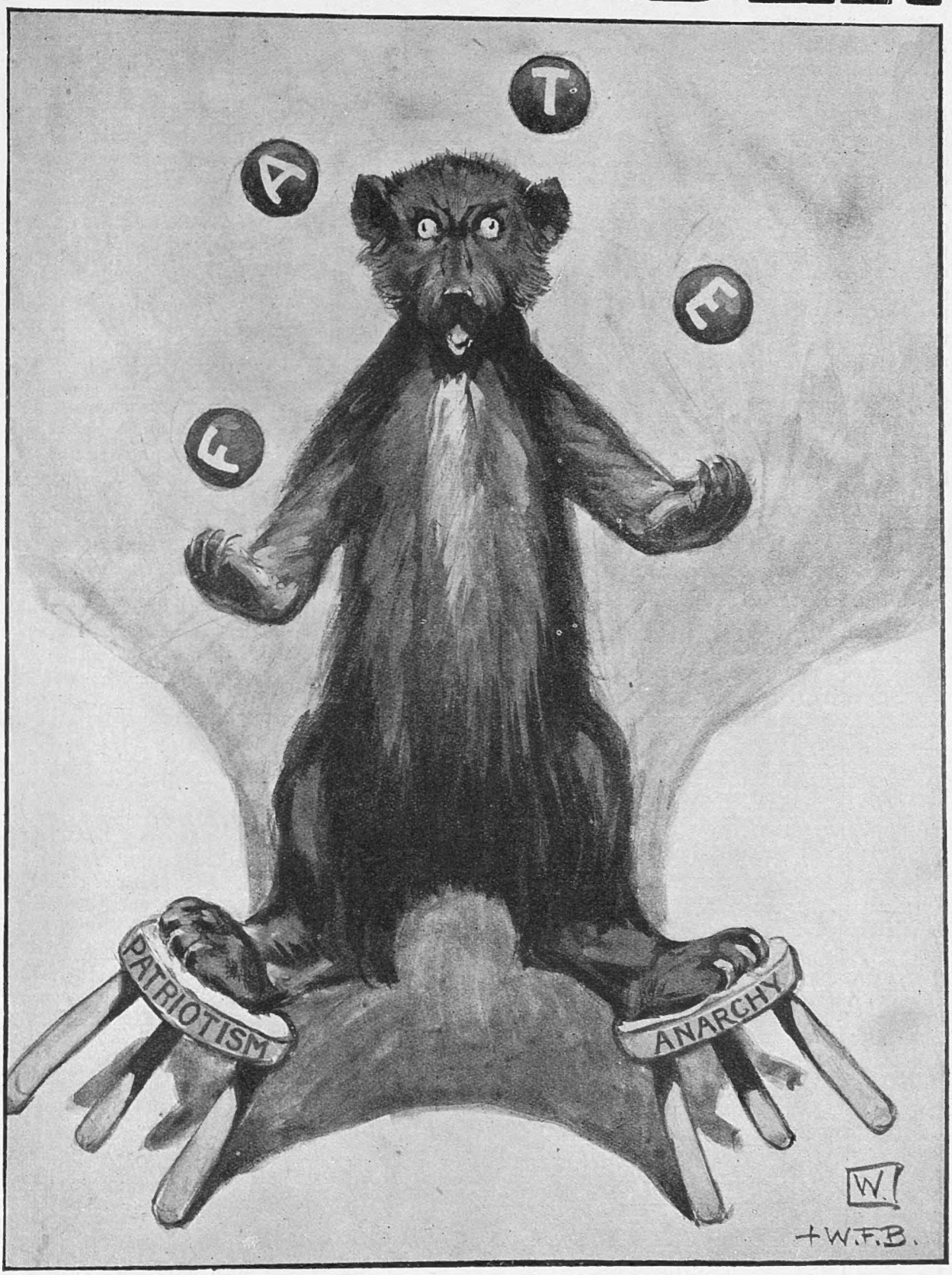
The Bystander, September 19, 1917.—No. 720. Vol. LV.

The BYSTANDER



JUGGLING WITH FATE

A rather nasty performance in the Eastern Theatre, but any moment may see the curtain rung down and a star turn take its place

BYSTANDER WAR COMMENTS

Kerensky *v.* Korniloff

THE Russian Revolution continues its kaleidoscopic—and catastrophic—career. To every day a fresh crisis. At the moment of writing, Kerensky appears to be getting the better of his struggle with Korniloff for the supreme voice in his country's destinies, but his tenure of power rests on very unstable foundations. Meanwhile the Germans advance slowly; Petrograd empties daily, not so much from the menace of a German occupation, but because the workers perceive that the prospect of "foodless days" are more than imminent in the capital. All of which must give occasion for a grim mirth to the ex-Tsar in his bleak quarters at Tobolsk. He can, at any rate, reflect that he never nominated six different Commanders-in-Chief of his armies in as many months!

Revolution or Regeneration

THOSE who were eager to hail Russia's Revolution as Russia's regeneration were clearly a little previous. Revolutions cannot regenerate a country of the size of Russia in a month or two. Germany's real victory does not consist in the capture of Riga, but in having by her secret agents thrown the whole country into chaotic anarchy. About the only consolation to be extracted is to look at the map, and so to recall the fact that there is a great deal of Russia, and that the further the Germans advance the thinner their line must be. Even the fall of Petrograd, lamentable though it would be, does not mean the conquest of Russia. Indeed, nothing is more likely than that Petrograd will cease to be the capital of Russia, which will probably restore Moscow to its ancient glories.

SPIRIT OF FREEDOM: "For heaven's sake, stop talking about me, and fight for me before it is too late!"

"We Shall Only Just Win"

LAST week's splendid weather has made the harvest outlook far more hopeful than it was after the storms of the week before. But certain speeches of the Premier's a month or two ago with regard to national food prospects have had just the effect which might have been foreseen, and caused many to assume the "everything's all right" attitude, and to imagine that economy in food-stuffs is no longer necessary. Mr. Kennedy Jones's campaign will clearly have to be restarted, in face of the August figures, which show that the consumption of rationed foodstuffs during the month was only 5½ per cent. less than in normal times. The mischief may be counteracted by the Premier's latest speech, in which he said that we shall only just win if everybody does his duty in this respect.

An Effect of the Holidays

CERTAINLY not everybody is doing his duty at present. People on holiday fall into the habit of relaxing their home strictness, and "do themselves well," with the result that when they get back home the habit has to be reformed, and its recapture is not easy. The worst offenders are the big Midland and Northern manufacturing districts, where the consumption of all rationed foodstuffs, except sugar, is higher now than in peace-times. These people will get a painful pinch if by their greediness they force compulsory rationing upon the whole country. And serve them right.

Something Wrong with Michaelis

I AM afraid there must be something seriously wrong with Dr. Michaelis. It must be nearly a month

(Continued on page 535)

The Two Davy-s

"Oh-h, to gootness, wass that you, Dafyd Jones? Yes, yes, I am Dafyd Lloyd George. What news this week of the Lock-er? Only twelve big ones! Strafing us? Oh, tear, no! Our figures are improving"

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MARRIAGE.

FISHER—PARRY.—On September 5, at St. James' Church, Cheltenham, by the Rev. H. Baskerville Mynors, Rector of Llanwarne, and the Rev. Robert Hodson, Vicar of St. Stephen's, Cheltenham, ARTHUR JOSEPH FISHER, Major A.O.D., youngest son of the late Rev. W. F. FISHER, of Shalfleet, Isle of Wight, and Mrs. FISHER, Almorah, Paignton, to CATHARINE ELIZABETH PARRY (KITTY), second daughter of the late Major H. H. PARRY, of Harewood Park, Ross, and Mrs. H. H. PARRY, of Stratford House, Cheltenham.

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OF

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ADMISSION THREEPENCE.

Including Entertainment Tax.

All Monies taken for admission to be paid without deduction to the British Red Cross Fund.

BYSTANDER COMMENTS (concluded)

now since he has discovered a fresh person on whom to settle, finally, the responsibility for the war. The last guilty one was, I think, General Sukhomlinoff, who, according to the new Chancellor, insisted on the continuance of the mobilisation of Russia's armies after "Nicky" had countermanded it at the mingled entreaties and threats of the Kaiser. Sukhomlinoff was, naturally, instigated to his course of action by the "sinister influence of England"—it wouldn't do to leave out that hate-reviving phrase. The ingenuity of the Chancellor is, however, probably not yet exhausted; by the time the war comes to an end I feel sure that about the only people to whom he will not have ascribed its inception will be Charlie Chaplin (who has certainly never had anything to do with the thing) and the Ahkoond of Swat.

A NEW OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF COMMODORE SIR REGINALD AND LADY TYRWHITT

German Diplomacy and Its Swedish Matches

JUST at the moment, however, the Chancellor is probably more busily engaged in disentangling the rather complicated threads of the Swedish-Argentine problem. The day has long since passed for people to be astonished at any of the depths of criminality disclosed by German diplomacy—that is, apparently, "common form"; but one still feels a little surprised that there are any neutral countries left able to shut their eyes to the fact that their sole *raison d'être* from the German point of view is that they are convenient places to hatch plots in. And, not content with staffing their own Embassies with some of the most plausible villains unhung, the authorities of the Wilhelmstrasse have not scrupled, when they found it possible, to corrupt and suborn the diplomatic agents of other countries. Nor can it be imagined that the case of the Swedish Minister to Argentina is the only instance in which Germany has been able to profit by information obtained through neutral "diplomatic channels" in Allied countries. But though these clumsy efforts serve their purpose for a time—even for a long time—their only ultimate result is that they force one country after another to join the League of Civilisation *versus* Prussianism.

FROM a special constable, on duty recently, to his brother in the trenches:

You, in the fields of Flanders,
Cheerfully raid the Huns,
Amid the hail of the bullets,
And the thunder of the guns:
I, in the streets of London,
Tell the reverse of the tale,
Stunned by the guns of the thunder,
Hit by the bullets of hail!

British official photograph from the Western Front

FURTHER COMMENT UNNECESSARY

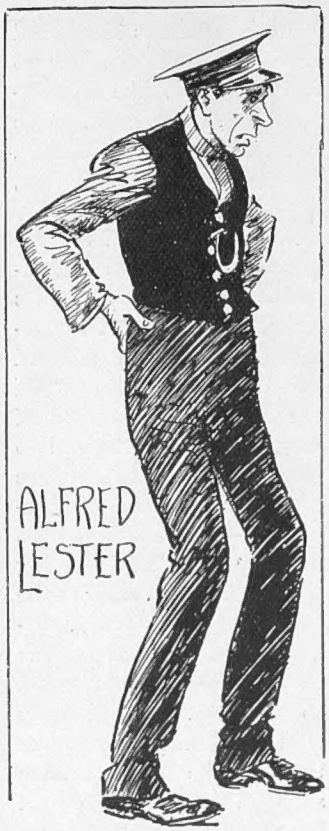
The Late NORMAN MORROW

and some of his recent work in "The Bystander"

GERALD DU MAURIER
As James Lane Fountain in "The Old Country"

Photograph *Hoppé*

THE LATE NORMAN MORROW
Who since the earliest days of "The Bystander" has illustrated its theatrical pages



ALFRED LESTER
In "Round The Map"

VIOLET VANBRUGH
As Georgina in "Mrs. Pomeroy's Reputation"

ARTHUR BOURCHIER
As Old Bill in Captain Bairnsfather's "Better 'Ole"

I HAD called to see him the day before, but he was not to be disturbed. He was sleeping peacefully, they told me, after many wakeful nights; so with a promise to call later I came away. And in the night word came on the telephone that he had died.

. . . . . .

The passing of Norman Morrow leaves a large gap in a sadly narrowing circle of old friends; and his death will be sincerely mourned by those who admired his art as well as by those who knew and loved the man. A strange, reticent man, with the simplicity of the child in worldly affairs and an enviable wisdom in the things that matter.

Norman Morrow was an artist. He had the infinite capacity for taking pains which is the corollary of genius. His work at the theatre placed him easily at the top of his own particular ladder, a distinction that he won only after much labour, and which he held by still more labour long after there had come to him the significant cough that tells its own cruel story, yet a story that he for one never would believe.

It is only a week or so ago that he wrote to me to say that he had shaken off his indisposition at last; and would henceforth be better and stronger than he had ever been. And now there is nothing more to be said but the simple word of sympathy to friends bereaved, which I, for the best and saddest of reasons, can speak to-day from my heart.

JINGLE

War-Workers

AND WHAT THEY ARE DOING

LADY SWETTENHAM
Who has lately been home on leave from the French front, where for many months she has been doing ambulance work

H.R.H. PRINCESS ARTHUR OF CONNAUGHT
Who did wonderful work in a London hospital during the recent night air-raid

MISS ROBERTA MacADAMS
Who holds a lieutenant's commission in the Canadian Army Medical Corps, has been selected as a candidate for election to the Alberta Legislature

LADY DOUGLAS
Who has thrice been mentioned in despatches, has run a Convalescent Red Cross Hospital for nearly two years, during the Dardanelles and Egyptian campaign, for the 42nd Division, commanded by her husband, Sir W. Douglas

Photographs by Hoppé, Corbett, and Bassano

Stockholm by Night: All Lit Up—But No One to Come!

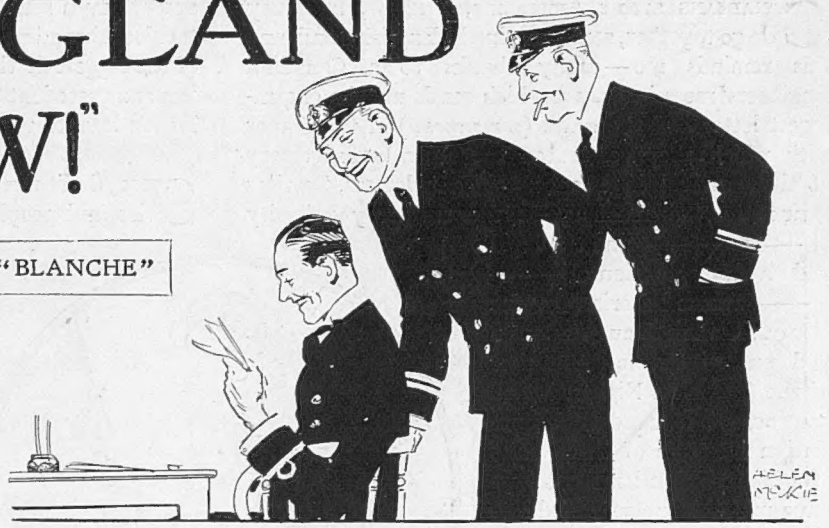
Photograph *R. Dykes, F.R.P.S.*

A VIEW OF THE BEAUTIFUL NORTHERN CITY LOOKING TOWARDS THE QUAYS AND ROYAL PALACE FROM THE KATANNA HISSIN

Stockholm has been a word of comfort to the Pacifists for some time past; but recent developments look like giving the Peace Conference at this particular city a nasty set-back

"IN ENGLAND -NOW!"

A WEEKLY LETTER FROM "BLANCHE"



"The Navigator and Assistant-Paymaster take too much interest in my letters to you"

LONDON, *September* 17, 1917.

DEAR COUSIN—

EXTRAORDINARY, isn't it, how positively every single thing in this world resolves itself, sooner or later, into a question of money? London, for instance, these air-raid months. . . . It's full of only the people who—mostly because they earn their living here—can't be anywhere else. The rest, the world that lives to amuse itself, is proving discretion, oh! by far the better part of valour, north, south, west—anywhere except where the Hun comes raiding.

卐 卐

MEANTIME—a riotous September at the seaside, where tradesmen and their like are piling Bradburys up to heaven, surprising even themselves by the prices asked, and given, and rooms can't be got at all by those who didn't book 'em at least three months ago. Up in Scotland the great houses are all occupied, and the very richest "live," as usual, in those plainest tweeds, loud check stockings, and low, brogued shoes proper to autumn. All just as in peace-time, you see, except that there seem more women about than ever—the result, of course, of fewer men. "With the whole united strength of our people we shall win, but we shall only *just* win," says the P.M. Quite amazing what a lot of people think *they*, at any rate, aren't strong enough to help! But then, of course, it *is* easier to believe the evidence of one's eyes than that of one's ears, isn't it?

"Revue ladies all in black and dining alone"

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AWFULLY amusing, by the way, here and elsewhere, to remark the newest note of the best revue girls. It's quietness—at least in appearance; and nothing if not in the movement, their all-black attire is hardly relieved even by the usual priceless rope of pearls that even our war-widows allow themselves. True, something very swish in the way of sables and things may be sported when autumn winds blow chill or anything. But it's no good earning £100 a week or thereabouts and not letting people *know*, is it?

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REMINDS me, another new amusement tax in force very shortly, and the wails of the amusement purveyors are reaching to high heaven, though as it's the public and not they who pay it I don't quite see their trouble. Personally, I'm sure people wouldn't mind paying more if only they *got* more for their money.

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APROPOS, one of the new books—Lord Harberton's "How to Lengthen Our Ears"—is quite amusing on the subject of the harmfulness of the well-read man. Every administrative post throughout the Empire, he says, is held by men with minds "that can display a distorted faculty for reading and remembering . . . instead of judging for themselves." The result is "that the Labour leaders have us at their mercy. Let the Socialists and Trade Unionists have every opportunity for reading," says this champion leg-puller; "but let us stop at once, for it is only by so doing that we shall regain our lost ascendancy." As it is the vice is spreading daily. "Things have come to such a pass that if we do not look out the aristocracy will have forfeited its special merit of disliking study and being more interested in their own opinions than in those of their author."

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OF course, to the well-read person there's hardly anything more ghastly than the unread—but all the same there's no denying he *does* make an awful mess of things, the well-read one, I mean.

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I'M rather amused to hear from an American engineer soldierman over here that he's "afraid you English ladies won't like the regular American officer, but later, when the volunteers get over, you are sure to run across some of our better types." And he gives the American version of a story *we* tell differently:

"Two Americans were telling (you call them fibs) on a bet. The first opened with 'I once knew a gentleman from Ohio——.' 'The money is yours!' replied the second."

(*Continued on page 540*)

"IN ENGLAND—NOW!" (*concluded*)

CANADIANS aren't Americans, I know, but they do go together, somehow, in the English mind, and this reminds me—many thanks to a Canadian Engineers' mess in France which sends me the charmingest letter *and* the *menu* (*some menu*) of the dinner with which they celebrated the second anniversary of their arrival in France. "Your letters," writes their major, "are such a relief after the prosy verbosity of ——— ———, and the lurid and vivid imagination of ——— ———, whose 'stories' of the war out-Grimm Hans Andersen and put to shame the author of the 'Arabian Nights.' Will you accept a word of appreciation from one of those units of which you and many others have probably never heard?

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"WE are the original and only genuine little bunch of Canadian Railway Engineers—beware of spurious imitations offered for your inspection by jealous and unscrupulous C.O.'s—who since August, 1915, have been working, unhonoured and unsung, in France and Belgium, running railways (real ones, not the 'Meccano' kind) up to the front line and repairing bridges or building new ones to replace those destroyed by Fritz in his glee on his slow, but sure, return journey to Berlin."

"Not strong enough to help"

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ANOTHER "Canuck" who'd like us to know he and his lot exist writes to ask if I've ever heard of that "supposedly unnecessary addition to the British Army, the D.A.C." "Why, dear Blanche, one D.A.C. has been over the top and actually captured an enemy gun. Think of it! The story goes that a small band of mule-drivers with their trusty mokes under them charged the enemy gun midst a rain of shrapnel and H.E., hitched up their mules to her, and thundered back to safety—all the while singing that old Southern melody, 'Old Black Joe.'

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"MANY thanks for the letters of good cheer you send to us exiles in this land of disillusions, where, oh! Blanche, the weather. . . .

Rain and sunshine, sunshine and rain,
A bit intermingled—but *always more rain!*"

And it's "with best wishes from us all—up to our necks in mud very nearly," that a Tank Corps battalion also crave a passing word, "for, despite its youth, I think you will agree the corps has earned no mean reputation." It has, indeed, and, with no less a person than H. G. Wells, I think that both the wonderful Tanks and the wonderful men who work them deserve even more than a mention. The way they've tackled a brand new job that's going to be, perhaps, one of the biggest of the war without a single rule to guide 'em or a precedent to work on is simply just too splendid. Here's love to them, and luck and (more) glory.

"The new Tank Corps officer"

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STILL, don't run away with the idea that the authorities and people aren't seeing to it that discipline and all that sort of thing are duly observed here in England now. The very latest is that everybody's simply *got* to salute everybody else (if he's a Britisher and a soldier, that is), and the A.P.M.'s and people'll jolly well have their blood, by order, if they don't. *Fairly* tiring for the young and lusty to-bring-the-hand-to-the-head-smartly-with-a-circular-motion-elbow-in-line, etc., say, fifty times between the Ritz and the Piccadilly. But, oh, *dear*, the poor woundeds! . . .

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TALKING of youth, my very youngest thing in naval correspondents seems positively to want to embroil me with the most frightfully important people on board H.M.S. Blank. "I say, I've got a topping idea, old thing," writes this Machiavelian sub-loot. "In one of your letters couldn't you, in the ripping way you generally bring things in, get a hit at our Navigator here? He's a lieut. and a very good fellow, but talk. . . . He's always got *yards* of hot air to spout over any subject. It's awful trying at times; and he loathes the gramophone, which I always switch on after the first quarter of an hour of it.

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"IT would be a great rag, as he's *so* interested in my writing to you. There is also the Asst. Paym.—'Pay' for short—who is also taking too much interest in you, and my writing. *He's* always poodle-faking on the beach and trailing after fair young things on the tennis courts. There's also No. 1, *quite* junior, but a confirmed misogynist—or pretends to be. You *should* have seen him entertaining the guests at our pulling regatta t'other day, when the skipper was out of the ship. Walking about with a proper boot face, doing the heavy, society, cake-handing business—it was a sight for the gods! And then there's ——."

卐 卐

TIME, please! I'm not writing a biographical sketch of the British Navy, am I? Though, of course, with the chilly autumn days coming in. . . .

With love, yours ever,

BLANCHE

Making Hay While the Sun Shines

Tommy, when duty's to be done,
Thinks naught of odds of two to one.

"Somewhere in Flanders"

LEAVE

My Dear Bystander—

One of the lessons the great war has taught me is never to arrive too early for the leave boat. It is from the ranks of the mistaken enthusiasts who like to take no risks of the boat going off before time that the Embarkation Officer selects his victims.

"I want you, please," said the Embarkation Officer, turning to me, "as duty officer to see that the men don't take their lifebelts off when they are sick."

⁂ ⁂

On any other occasion I should have given a mocking laugh, and with icy sarcasm drawn attention to the folly of entrusting such a task to one whose principal form of nourishment on a ship consists of little flesh-coloured capsules out of a rectangular box, but the imminence of leave bathes the world in a tint of rose and even the Embarkation Officer seemed beautiful in the sunlight. The mere possibility of being sick was ridiculous.

"Aye, aye!" I answered readily, and lit a "Ruby Queen."

⁂ ⁂

"That's Private Hooker, sir," explained the red-faced sergeant, glancing at the human wreck before us. "He's being sick somethin' 'orrible, and keeps chuckin' off his belt and ——."

PASSED BY CENSOR

THE SYMPATHISER: "Wot's the matter, George?"
GEORGE: "Wot the 'ell does it look like? Trench feet?"

"Sick?" I broke in incredulously. "Why, the sea's like a pond! See that that man keeps his belt on, sergeant, or back he goes by the next boat."

. . . . . .

I suddenly became conscious of a small, thin voice speaking through a mist about fifty miles away.

"This cabin is reserved for General Jones," it kept droning on. "You can't be sick here, sir. This cabin is reserved for General Jones. I say you can't be sick here, sir."

Weak as I was I smiled wanly in the direction of the voice. "Can't I?" I moaned piteously. "Oh—you—just—wait—and—see!"

⁂ ⁂

That a few days leave be really beneficial to the system it is essential that the mind dissociate itself entirely from work. I can do this quite easily—I can forget all about spies in a minute. If I were to enter the wrong bedroom in a London hotel and observe a short, thickset man, with hair growing at right angles to his cranium, busily engaged in packing up a wireless apparatus in his Gladstone bag, I should merely ring the bell twice for the chambermaid, pass her the facts for her information and necessary action, please, call a taxi, and drive hurriedly from the scene.

It is the simple pleasures of the country that afford the maximum of mental repose and build up the body until such time as the next leave falls due.

It is good to lie in a hot bath in a state of gentle torpor, superbly indifferent to the flight of time, and idly watch the cawing jackdaws circle high above the spire of the Norman tower. The vision of a cow ruminating in a meadow against a background of giant beeches intrigues me now as it never did before, and the argot of the ancient rustic leaning against the pigsty railings and deploring the fact that "they leece, they run about on them pigs holly wunnerful," is as music to the tympanum.

⁂ ⁂

My colleague, George Bullock, on the other hand, being surcharged with nervous energy, is, as it were, always on duty.

When on leave last month he sat up the first two nights in his mother's flat in Kensington listening to what was believed to be Morse Code being tapped in the flat overhead. The third night he spent on the roof on the look-out for a red light which his father-in-law had seen somewhere near the Brompton Oratory. The next day he followed a suspicious looking man from Regent Street to Ball's Pond, and the following night he spent in the wet grass in Surrey looking out for a bonfire which his hostess had told him was often seen in those parts. The result is that his brain is now affected, and it costs his family thirty shillings a week to hire a man to take him out for walks in Kensington Gardens.

Yours ever,

Jack Johnson

"Old Bill" at Madame Cheerio's

PASSED BY CENSOR

"You are shortly going on a journey across a field; an ugly man with a square head will cross your path; you will then hear a loud noise, after which you will rise very high in your profession." (Old Bill, incited by Bert to have his fortune told, before returning to the front, didn't like the sound of this forecast at all)

BY CAPTAIN BRUCE BAIRNSFATHER

The Bystander in Paris

"In this cup the great Marshal French took tea"

AGNES AT THE FRONT

Messieurs et Dames—

Lucile says that one should decide one's day before one puts on one's camisole; but I like better to leave things to chance. To-day when I dressed I did not know what I should do, but I felt happy because the rain had gone, so I put on my underneath things with the blue ribbons and my new autumn *tailleur*. And wonderful things have happened. I have been in that forbidden country, the zone of the armies, and seen many of our *poilus* and some of you, but you did not know it was Agnes.

⁂

I had almost decided that I would go and see what the fashion in winter coats was to be when it happened. Our friend, the English colonel, came and asked if we would like to go to M—— (I am going to be so careful not to make Monsieur the Censor troubled). Then I was glad because I had not decided my day before I put on my camisole. Lucile was not so happy. She had arranged what she should do, and she could not come. So I went alone. For a *jeune fille*, even when she is so English as me, that is something exciting. I do not think my mother or my aunts ever travelled alone with a man before their *voyage des noces*. But the war has changed even that so strict rule.

⁂

And we went to M——, where there is one of our beautiful cathedrals. Now, there are not many English there, but three years ago at this time your first divisions knew it well. You, our friends and allies of the new armies, are winning the war, but we in Paris will never forget those first divisions. They and our brave army saved our dear city.

⁂

We had such a good joke with the sentry, the Colonel and I. He is not very young, our friend—what you call, I think, a dug-up, and that is why he is here in Paris. When we descended from the train the sentry asked for our papers. He had his, but for me it was different. I was for a moment frightened. Perhaps I would be arrested. But the *poilu* was wishful to oblige the English colonel. "Madame is a relation?" he asked. We regarded each other. Would a so little lie save us? "*Épouse peut-être*," the *poilu* suggested, and I said: "Yes, yes, I am the wife of the English colonel." And so we went into the town. But I wonder what Mrs. Colonel would say if she knew.

⁂

In Paris I think we sometimes forget about the war. There is so much to do occupying oneself till

(Continued on page 546)

"He won't care so much about Nellie O'Farrel"

Far from the Trench's Madding Strife

THERE ARE STILL SOME OF THESE

THE BYSTANDER IN PARIS (*concluded*)

it is finished. But at M—— they do not forget. The Boche came too near three years ago, and there is one old lady who will never forget. She had a so interesting history to tell. One afternoon, she said, when she was all alone thinking how the Germans would soon come, an English officer came to her café beside the cathedral. Would she make tea, he asked, for the Marshal French, the great commander of the English? "How I was frightened," she said, "because I had heard that the English did not make tea like us. I wondered if they ate the leaves. But I thought, 'I must do my best for France, and then the English will fight well,' and I asked the young officer how the Marshal would like his tea. He said very, very strong, and I put a whole five spoonfuls in the pot, and watched through a little hole in the curtain. The great Marshal drank three cups, and I was so pleased, and he stayed for three hours working with his maps and his papers."

"I was for a moment frightened"

✲

She had guarded his cup and his saucer, and after the war said she would have a great brass *plaque* made to put on the wall: "Here the great English Marshal French took tea while winning the battle of the Marne." "And all the English will come," she said, "and take tea at my *café*."

✲

What places there will be to visit when the war is over, and what a great multitude of English and Americans will come. I think we are afraid a little of that, we French people, except those who will be glad of the money of the English and the Americans; because, you know, you are very foolish with your money. You let yourselves be cheated so easily, and that is worse for those who cheat than for those who are cheated. The poor Colonel had such a bad adventure. There was a little shop where they sold souvenirs, and he wanted to buy some. So he went into the shop and bought two Boche helmets from the funny old lady who was the *marchande*. I was looking at other things, and did not hear what he was paying till he had almost paid. Then I turned round. That robber-woman was charging him one hundred francs for the two, which she had bought for a hundred sous when the Boche left them behind three years ago and the little boys picked them up in the fields. I was so cross because she had tried to cheat the English Colonel, and I think when the war is over no Englishman should be allowed to travel in France without a Frenchwoman to help him bargain.

✲

When we were going to the station at M—— we had such a surprise. A big man, with one leg and a so funny face like the boys make of snow, with little coals for eyes and a great big mouth, saluted the Colonel. "Excuse me, sor," he said, "but do you happen to have seen any of the Dublin bhoys in these latter times?" The Colonel was so surprised. "What are you doing here?" he asked, and the man said: "Well, sir, you see, I lost my leg in these parts three years back, and when I got me discharge I felt kind of lonely thinkin' of it being over here and the rest of me not keepin' it company. And when I went home again Nelly O'Farrel would have nothing to do with me because I had lost my leg for England, and she had taken up with a Sinn Feiner. So I wrote to the Colonel, and he helped me to come back here, where there was a decent widow-woman who made us bhoys all comfortable the day before I lost the half of me trousers. She isn't so young as Nelly O'Farrel, but she had four fields to her little *café* over there by the corner, and a great cleverness in making onion broth. And we're married as tight as the priest can tie us, and making great progress in understanding each other. When the son we're expecting arrives I'm thinking I won't care so much about Nelly O'Farrel and the way she treated me, and its more of a fortune I'm making out of the fine crops of corn and potatoes I'm having on these four fields than ever I would have made in King's County or in Clare, where my brother is after breaking his back every day of his life trying to make good crops grow on the heap of stones he stole from me the day me father died and me in the army and not there to take me own part."

✲

I am wondering how many more of your Messieurs there will be before the war is over who will feel lonely because you have left a leg or an arm or a heart in France.

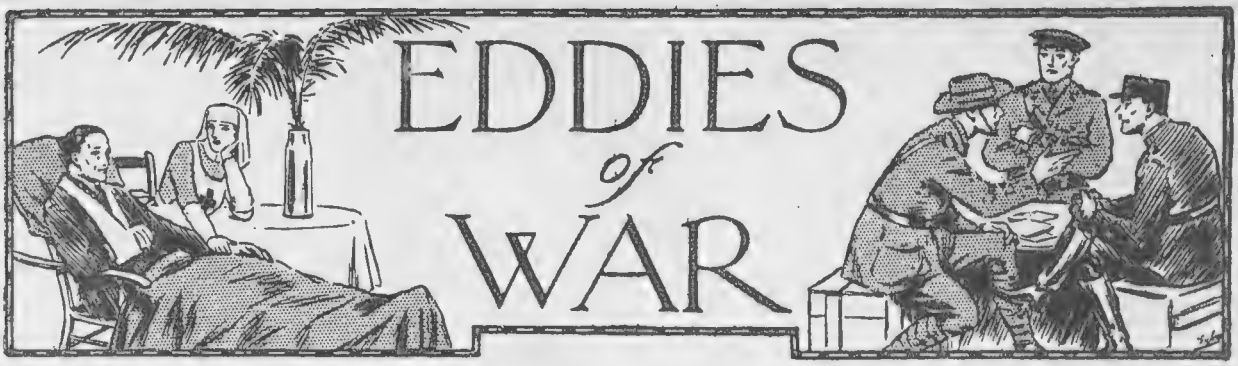
Your French friend,

AGNES

Nature's Silhouettes

SCOTS GUARDS GOING INTO ACTION

These official photographs combine action, humour and pathos, all naturally silhouetted. The Guards going "over the top"; the obvious and natural request for a match ("Bert" to the life, isn't it?), and the soldier gazing on his best pal's grave, form three studies of more than passing interest



BATTLE HONOURS.

BY DELL LEIGH

THERE is a certain army corps, as yet unbeaten, and with practically no casualties worth speaking of, that has done some pretty severe fighting since the early part of 1915. It is a corps of women. I will not give you its correct name; indeed, I dare not, as I know some of—shall we say?—the brass hats at the head of it, and I fear, with a great and abiding terror, the descent that would be made upon me the next morning were I to sail too near the shores of accurate description, and so expose them and their funny ways to a world eager to jibe at any effort a woman makes which men are pleased to say is "outside her province." I became caught up in the advance of this corps in the early stages of its campaigning. The fight began in this way—and mark you the cunning tactics of the enemy. The fates had decreed that about this time I was to sit in a very stuffy room, amid a thousand other rooms, and interview people oh matters of all sorts connected with the war. You realise the truism some fellow gave vent to that the population of London consisted of eight million people—mostly fools. You interview people of your own sex chiefly, so that when the messenger comes in and says "a lady wishes to see you," you remain true to the traditions of your office and cease to remember you were once a gentleman. My messenger (rather ruffled about the features) said "you *must* see 'er, sir, she won't take 'no' from me." I told him *I* would hand out the "no," and very quickly.

⁂ ⁂

SHE came in and sat down and said, "I want a cupboard." This was the last thing I expected her to say, and she knew it. That is why she said it. Of course, I hadn't got a cupboard. Never in all my life have I felt so lacking in cupboards as I did then. As I became more nervous and "official" she became more at ease. I had to produce the inevitable cigarette-case to gain time. She asked if she might smoke while we discussed this cupboard business; and, of course, by that time she had captured my few obsolete guns, and I was merely a gibbering prisoner. What is more, she had on a particularly neat uniform, and she (carefully) sat with her back to the light, and the anæmic winter sun made her hair look like ripe corn.

⁂ ⁂

IT appeared that, by some means or other, they, the corps, had gained a footing in our fortress; had opened an office (how they got it beats me), but were getting no assistance whatever in the matter of furniture. Furthermore, wedged as they were in the midst of officers, permanent and very temporary, they were experiencing opposition of an acute and insidious kind. I was led, I believe by the hand, to their offices, not a hundred yards from mine, and saw the bare floors and walls, the kitchen table or two, the three unsteady chairs, and the dirty whitewashed walls. The comparative comfort of my own office was brought home to me by her and her associates; and I was offered a cup of superb China tea, which one of them, in that extremely attractive uniform, was cozening out of a cheap spirit lamp on the floor. Well, you know, it is a strong man that can hold up against this sort of thing! They told me the Government tea I got was "filthy," and that I could come and drink theirs. I wasn't actually enrolled into the corps, because, they said, my absurd sex was against me. But other than that I had to get them whatever they wanted—there was no way out of it. They were doing very fine work, too, which fact robbed me of the only weapon I could wield; and they were doing it with no help from anyone but their capable selves. What they were doing was what we had all wanted and had never had the pluck to ask for. Briefly, then, they defeated me, and continued, a struggling little unit without pay or promotion, and in the teeth of an opposition the like of which would have cowed the most ambitious male that ever compiled an Army Order.

⁂ ⁂

AN eddy of war swirled me away to other spheres of alleged usefulness, and I saw them no more. But the other day she remembered me, and took me out to lunch at the Berkeley. She is still in the attractive uniform, only more so. Inquiries, during a neglected meal, as to the progress of the corps revealed the fact that from small beginnings had arrived great endings. For she handed me a pamphlet headed "Army Council Instructions No. 9473 of 1917." And that told me all. A pamphlet, if you please, of forty pages. An A.C.I. devoted entirely to their interests, issued by the War Office—signed, sealed, and delivered, as it were. Those who run may read that the corps is now an integral part of the Army, and is to be treated with marked respect as such. If you are still stupid enough to scoff you will be pulled up short by such a clause in the pamphlet as: "Identity discs will be worn by all members proceeding overseas." And there are plenty of them serving overseas, my gentle profiteer with the fat bank balance! In the pamphlet occur also what are to me, an old friend, amusing passages. Store tables with such items as "Tables, dressing, with toilet glass." "Chairs, easy, wicker . . . one per ten women." "Pans, frying, large . . . one per one hundred women." And so on.

⁂ ⁂

WHEN I handed back the pamphlet to her she asked me what I thought of it all? I told her that a corps such as hers carried no regimental colours. But, knowing their early struggles, and the fine work they had done, it seemed to me that the fifty-four clauses in the pamphlet represented the best battle honours I knew of. Don't you agree with me?

The Morning Hate

PASSED BY CENSOR

CAPTAIN: "Either I'm the captain of this ship or I'm a blankety blank fool!"
MIDDY: "Yessir!"

BY RALPH CLEAVER

Safety

A FEW KIND HINTS IN THE ART OF

First

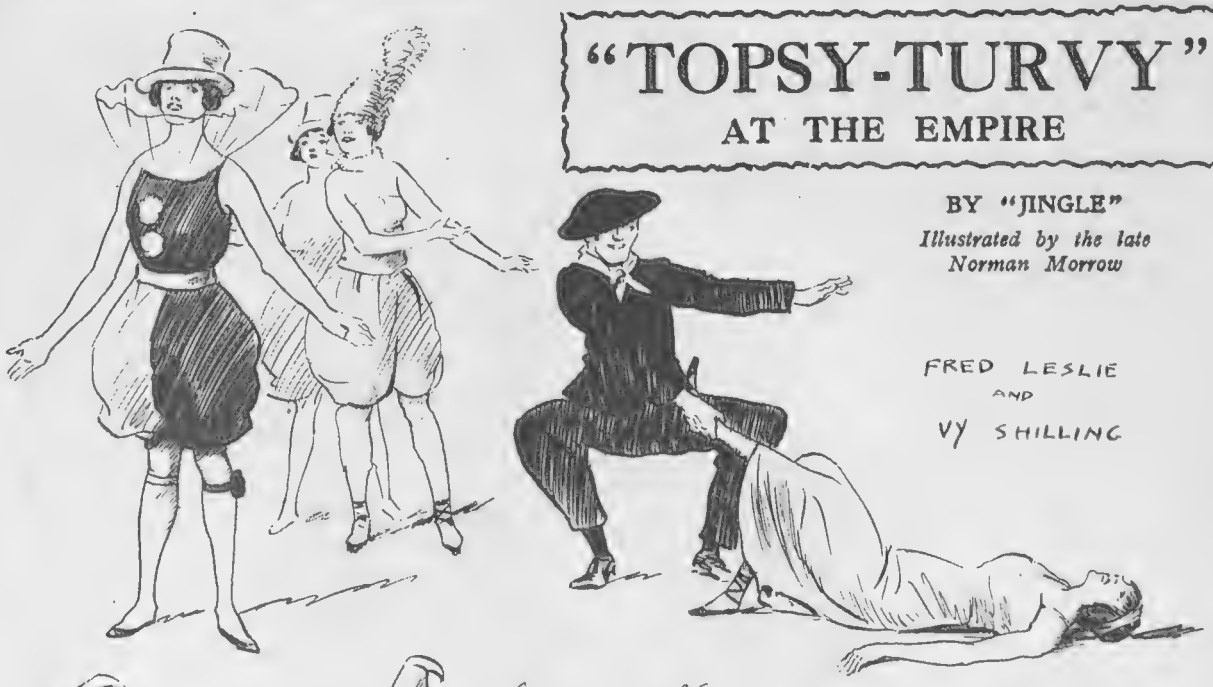
TAKING COVER DURING AIR RAIDS

LONDON NIGHTS ENTERTAINMENTS

"TOPSY-TURVY"
AT THE EMPIRE

BY "JINGLE"

Illustrated by the late Norman Morrow



SOME graceless person once alleged that the most changeable thing in the world is—woman; but it would be hard to find anything more changeable than this pleasantly varied revue. This is all to the advantage of the amusement-seeker, because if you don't like the pickles you can try the sauce, as it were. And there is no lack of the latter condiment in the feast of good things available at the Empire just now. The first scene is hardly a fair sample of the goods. An attempt has been made to illustrate the title of the revue by showing a portion of London upside down, with the members of the chorus walking about on their hands and flourishing their feet in the air. The joke seems to have been produced at some expense; whereas the keynote of humour is, I understand, simplicity.

*

BUT the next scene atones for all. We have the roof of one of the old horse 'buses of our youth, which nowadays seem deader than the dodo. I am, unfortunately, old enough to remember when omnibuses first appeared in London with "garden seats" on the roof in place of the old "knifeboard," and quite believed what I was told, namely, that this would be the Londoner's favourite method of travelling about town for the future. But, as the poet has so aptly observed—perhaps not! Mr. Robert Hale gives a delightful representation of the rich and fruity old 'bus-driver of those leisurely days, who bandied chaff with the passengers and commented with a lively humour on all men and all things. It is all excellent nonsense.

*

A QUICK change brings us to an underground cellar in Paris with a sort of Apache story accompanying the scene. This serves as an excuse for some elaborate dancing of the fierce kind personally conducted by Miss Ivy Shilling and Mr. Fred. A. Leslie in the most approved manner. This is followed by a scene entitled "Young England." The England represented is very young indeed—in its babyhood, to be precise. We are shown a sort of *crèche*, where ladies of distinction

(Continued on page 554)

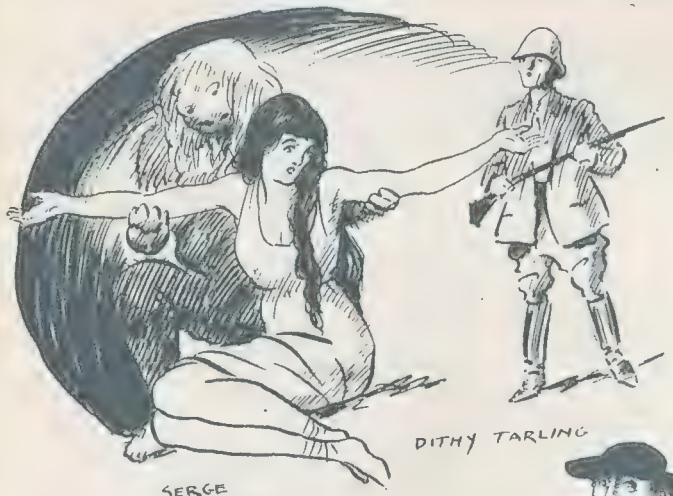
A Camera Study in Light and Shade

Photograph *Claude Harris*

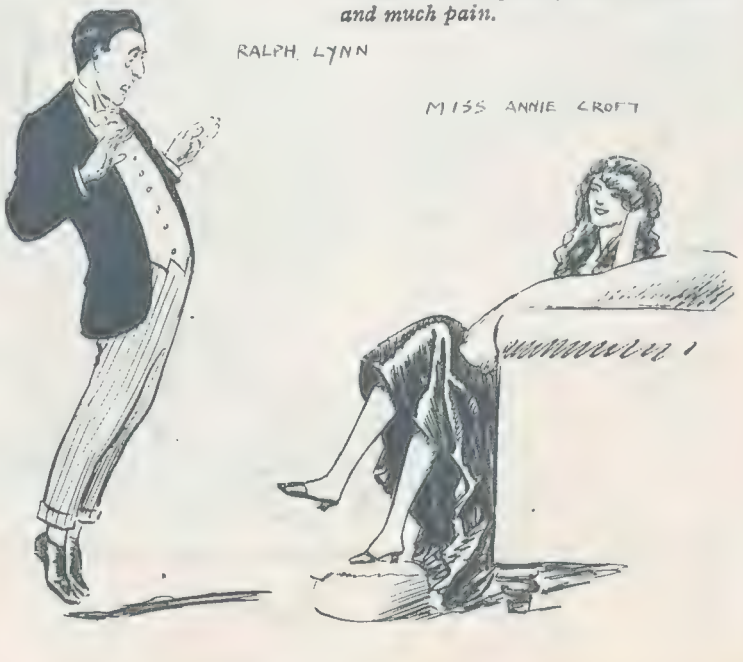
MISS BILLIE CARTON

One of the real beauties of the stage, who is to take a principal part in the musical version of Sir A. W. Pinero's play, "The Magistrate," at the Adelphi

"TOPSY-TURVY" AT THE EMPIRE



are nursing babies in arms, while the vicar of the parish is repeating the good Bishop's appeal to the effect that it is the duty of everybody (except, apparently, himself) to rear a large family for the sake of the Empire's future. The vicar's apology for his own dereliction in this respect is presumably to be classed as war humour, and as such is, of course, beyond criticism. At the close of his speech the vicar undertakes to show the ladies present how to undress a baby, and he actually performs the feat, with a meticulous care for detail, before their eyes—and ours. I hope I shall never be suspected of being a proper person, but I could not help thinking that this joke was a little outside the limit of the scope of rollicking humour.



ANOTHER scene initiates the ladies in the art of keeping a husband at home in the evening. We have the good, domesticated wife in a very home-made frock who complains that her husband actually prefers being at his club to sitting at home with her while she passes a delightful evening expatiating on the virtues of her dear mother. Incidentally we learn that she knits all her own stockings and wears red flannel underneath. She is, in fact, one of those extremely good women who usually bring out all that is bad in man from his sheer yearning for contrast. Then a woman of the world calls on the wife and prescribes a cure which consists, among other things, of silk stockings adroitly exhibited when filled with the right goods, and other attractive articles of dress designed, as has been written, to accentuate the charms they are supposed to hide, or something of that sort. It is quite an object lesson in itself, and conveys a moral—or, at least, would do so, if we had time for that sort of thing in these days.

ONE of the most beautiful scenes in the revue shows us a jungle in which a young and lovely girl has got lost and is in danger of being carried off by a large specimen of the anthropoid ape when she is rescued by a big-game hunter, and, I trust, lives happily ever after. Another jump brings us back to earth in the shape of a burlesque of that strange play *Three Weeks*, now showing in another place. Mr. Robert Hale, in a most elaborate evening gown, impersonates the amorous queen, and makes all the jokes that such a story must obviously inspire. Or nearly all of them. Must save one or two for the club, I suppose. I should not like to say that I found the scene unusually amusing or agreeable; but as to its cleverness there could be no doubt. Sandwiched in between all these changing scenes are songs with scenic accompaniment, some of which are of the very first quality. JINGLE

EDITORIAL NOTE.—*The theatrical drawings this week have a pathetic interest since they are the last work of the late Norman Morrow. It is characteristic of his devotion to duty that Norman Morrow insisted on working to the end in spite of much weakness and much pain.*

Army Instructions Bystandardised—No. 11

Dugouts, if built without support,
Collapse when wet and you get caught

PASSED BY CENSOR

"Is that you, 'Orace?"
"Y-e-s"
"Well, wot d'yer mean by sayin' yer father was a builder?"

Shrapnel Pars

ADMIRAL SCHEER thanks God that the German is not so spoilt as the Briton. And he will be less and less pampered as the years roll by, give Gott der tanks! as they say in Flanders.

THE experiment of including business men in the Government, Mr. Lloyd George assures us, has been an unqualified success. The success, in fact, is so dazzling it won't bear looking into.

A PREHISTORIC find, exclaims the heading of a newspaper par. If we had our way some of our prehistorics would be imprisoned without the option of a fine.

IT's all very well to tell us to be stout of heart; but look at the price of stout.

A THIEF, we are told, sentenced to eighteen months' hard labour, had been exempted until August 31 on account of his exceptional business obligations. What of it? There are many such cases—minus the eighteen months.

YOU cannot defend the shrine of Liberty with garlands, says the Prime Minister. True, not even though they are composed of flowers of speech.

THERE is a good deal of very loose and mischievous talk about peace, says Sir Edward Carson. Motto for the wise man: Keep a stiff upper lip and hold your peace.

IT seems to take a great many miles of speeches to make a league of peace.

"WILLY" and "Nicky"
Were frightfully tricky;
To-day they look silly,
Do "Nicky" and "Willy"

THEY'VE fined a potato-dealer £5,500 for overcharging. Better to have waited till the spring, and fined him in potatoes.

IT is now clear that if the Imperial conspirators had had their way in 1904 Europe would then have been plunged into war willy-nilly—not to say "Willy-Nicky."

REALLY, there's no need for the German Press to protest so loudly that the Huns are quite satisfied with their Kaiser. After all, why shouldn't they be? It isn't as if he were a man of honour, or a gentleman.

A HAPPY thought of our volatile Premier to visit Port Sunlight at the time of his latest war-speeches. It being his job to raise the spirits of the nation, he couldn't have done anything more appropriate than to seek out a serviceable and patriotic Lever.

REFUSING to be warned by the experience of the sixteenth-century Spaniards, the Austrians continue to indulge in premature boasts of their Invincible Hermada.

"THE BARD" on the Meat Problem—LORD RHONDDA (*as Ghost of Hamlet's Father*) to butcher: "List, list—O list!"

BUTCHER (*as Hamlet*): "The time is out of joint—O cursed spite That ever I was born to set it right!"

A POLICEMAN has nobly vindicated the integrity of his order by refusing a bribe of two-and-a-half-pounds of sugar. We don't believe that even a whole box of matches would have tempted this splendid fellow!

FOR having a single match in his possession, by the way, a munition-worker was recently fined £10. A little expensive, surely, even at the present market value of the article?

FOR an absolutely convincing defence, commend us to a too-much-married man's recent reply to a charge of bigamy. "It's all right," he explained cheerily, "*I made a mistake the first time!*" After all, in any case of the kind, that's all there is to it!

A SOUND REFLECTION

THE CORPORAL (*to Patsy, who has dropped his shaving-mirror*): "That means seven years' bad luck for yer, Patsy"

PATSY: "Sure, if I live to 'ave sivin years' bad luck, it'll be *good* luck!"

By appointment to *H.M. The King*

The Original Trench Coat

IT'S service rendered "out there" under weather conditions unutterably vile that have established "The Thresher's" unassailable pre-eminence amongst campaign coats.

Nearly 18,000 British Officers, following the W.O. recommendation the first winter of the war, have put "The Thresher" to the practical test of active service. And daily the number grows because "Thresher" comfort, protection and trustworthiness have become proverbial amongst fighting men.
And now the new registered

"MELCAM" INTER-LINING

that impenetrable, imperishable, pliant and uncrackable lining which is introduced into all "Threshers," make even better a coat which embodies the experience of 150 years of Military Tailoring.

THE THRESHER

Trench Coat, with detached "Kamelcott" lining ...	**£6 6 6**
With Detachable Sheepskin lining	**£8 8 0**
Trench Coat, unlined ...	**£4 14 6**

Cavalry type, with knee flaps and saddle gusset, **15/6** extra.

Send size of chest and approximate height, and to avoid any delay enclose cheque when ordering. All sizes in stock.

THRESHER & GLENNY

Military Tailors since the Crimean War,

152 & 153 Strand, London, W.C.

Impedimenta

By Y. E. S.

It is in a measure surprising how little the War Office thinks a man wants here below, but the really astonishing thing is the hugeness of the pile which that little makes when we come to move. I don't know Ginger's views on the subject, but they are undoubtedly strong ones. I know that when he saw the portion of the pile which he was to carry for the advance party he resolved to forego for once his preference for cross-country manœuvres, and stick to the road. Ginger is the red horse, whose personal characteristics are as pronounced as his colour.

The C.O. gave Densmore two hours to get there with his advance party, but the wind had a voice in the matter, and countermanded somewhat forcibly the orders of the C.O. When you have to cycle sixteen miles in the teeth of a gale, Densmore says you end up by walking most of it.

Densmore summoned his servant on the previous evening, and gave him what he calls clear, detailed instructions upon the subject of his personal kit.

"Byrne," he said, "you'll have to pack everything to-night, and call me at five in the morning."

"Very good, sir."

"Of course, there are some things you can't pack—to-night, that is—but you'll have to pack them in the morning. If I get up at five—I mean when I get up—that is at five o'clock after I am up, you can pack my blankets and pyjamas. I'll wear my raincoat—for it's sure to rain, as there's a circle round the moon, at least, I think there is, I know there was one last night—if it's not raining you can strap it on my bike. See that it's well oiled—my bike, I mean. I'll carry my map-case, and my "gaspirator," and my revolver, and my water-bottle, and my field glasses, and my compass, and my haversack—you needn't pack them—no I won't—you can pack up my field-glasses, and my compass, and my water-bottle. I'd better carry the "gaspirator" and my revolver in case I drop across any of the Staff. You can pack everything to-night—except what you can't pack until morning, as I said."

"What about your gum-boots, sir?" asked Byrne, indicating Densmore's legs.

"You'll have to pack them in the morning, of course. You don't expect me to go about in two feet of mud in my socks, do you?"

"Very good, sir."

"Let me see," said Densmore, who has the melodramatic failing of soliloquy, "the C.O. won't be up for hours after I start—I'll be away at eight." Byrne waited for more.

"Byrne," said Densmore, "you can put everything else in my kit-bag, and put my blankets in my pack."

"That'll make the pack very heavy, sir."

"I can't help that. You can take the pack off my equipment, and put it in the mess cart with the other stuff. You may as well put it in the bottom of the cart, under something—for safety."

"I know, sir," said Byrne. "Is that all, sir?"

"Yes, Byrne; I said I'd get up at five."

"You said I was to call you at five, sir."

"I said no such thing, Byrne. At least, if I did it was a figure of speech. I suppose you know what a figure of speech is. You ought to, for I often use them. What I meant was that you are to get me up at five—not a minute later."

Densmore says the wind wakened him long before Byrne did. It was howling round the house, and roaring through the trees, and he could not go to sleep again until he found in which direction it was blowing. When it started to rain, and the rain beat upon the window, he knew that it would be dead against him and his advance party. He was, consequently, very sleepy when Byrne called him. But he got up at twenty to six—which was time enough, after all, as he had shaved over night. He left Byrne to finish packing, and to load up the cart when it came, whilst he repaired to breakfast.

Densmore got away at 8.15. His party consisted of the cook-corporal and three cooks, a pioneer corporal and three pioneers, Delaney, the mess waiter, and Dupire, who speaks French and English, to act as interpreter. He left Byrne to come next day with the company, as Dupire could take his place in the meantime.

Densmore says he is convinced that every motor transport lorry in France passed him on the road. They overtook him by hundreds, pushed the advance nearly into the ditch, and splashed more mud on them than they would have picked up by rolling quite into the ditch. When the lorries had got a quarter of a mile ahead they halted for him to pass. As soon as he had done so they started off again, and splashed by in their many hundreds, obliterating the first coating of mud with a fresh one. When this had happened more times than he could count (that is the worst of the habit of counting in hundreds), they at last got clear ahead. When Densmore was just congratulating himself that he had seen the last of them they all came back, with reinforcements, at a speed which suggested that dinner lay in their new direction, or the enemy, or something urgent.

The cook's cart didn't know its way to the new billeting area, and Densmore had to wait for it at sundry points, and direct it to the next place where he would wait for it and again point out the road. Then one of the cooks had a spill and bent his pedal. Densmore had to wait for him. Then another cook had a spill, and hurt his ankle. Densmore had to wait for him. When he wasn't waiting for the cook's cart he was waiting for cooks. Whether it was during one of the periods of waiting or not Densmore does not seem to be quite certain, but at one o'clock he found himself in the village which the company was to occupy. Densmore says that as the wind certainly did not blow him to his destination it may possibly have blown his destination to him.

The Divisional Cavalry were already billeted in the village. They looked after the feeding of Densmore's men, and they invited him to lunch, tea, and dinner. This hospitality greatly cheered the advance party, and, moreover, in the intervals of its dispensation one of the officers helped Densmore to secure the necessary

(All rights strictly reserved)
(Continued on page 560)

"—and did you get the sausage?"

"Yes. It was hot work, but I downed the balloon. My machine got winged and I made rather a rotten landing. They thought I was hurt, but I was only feeling for my Kenilworths. And then I spent five of the happiest minutes of my life—enjoying the most perfect cigarette—and thinking of the most perfect girl in the world."

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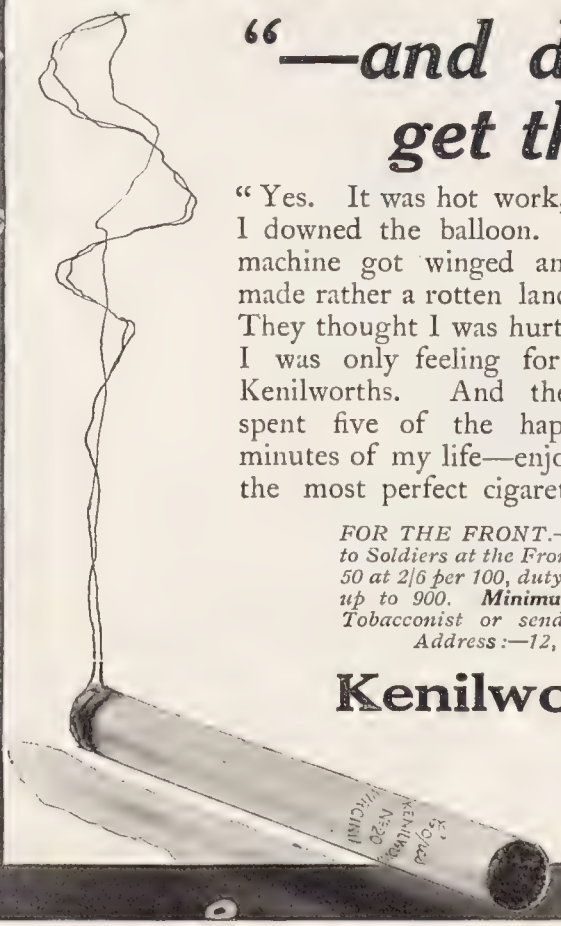

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"IMPEDIMENTA" (*concluded*)

billets. The cavalry had very naturally secured the best for themselves, but those which remained were quite a good second.

When billets had been fixed, including an office, quartermaster's stores, cycle shed, officers' mess, sergeants' mess, mechanics' shop, and guardroom, and when the cooks and pioneers had got busy on their respective jobs, Densmore told Dupire and Delaney, the mess waiter, to fetch his kit along to his room and unpack. There was a lot of mud to be scraped off, and brushed off, and washed off, and some changing to be done before he could present himself at dinner in the cavalry mess.

"Fetch out my blankets," said Densmore to Dupire, when he was nearly dressed. "They are in my pack—I told Byrne to put them there."

"They are in the kit-bag, sir," said Dupire.

"Byrne is a silly ass," said Densmore—or something of that nature. "No wonder the kit-bag looked disgracefully bulky. Is the pack empty?"

"No, sir; there's something in it."

"What?"

Dupire turned out the pack. It contained a goat-skin coat, a pair of boots, and some shirts—evidently impedimenta belonging to Byrne, and which Byrne should have carried along with the sundry other things it is decreed shall be hung on soldiers.

"Well, I'm damned!" said Densmore.

It is a nice point to decide whether the C.O., Densmore, or Ginger were the most put upon. The C.O. is still in happy ignorance of the facts. Ginger may not know the intricacies of the wheels within wheels, but, after all, the important thing is that it was he who carried the load. Y. E. S.

The Parish Pump

BY ARNOLD GOLSWORTHY

In these days when our newspapers give us little else but the news of the progress of the war, we are apt to overlook the tremendous events that are taking place in other parts of the earth where people are in the happy position of being able to mind their own business. Sneaking away for a week-end recently to a very rural village I found myself in a spot where the subject of the war is quite snowed under by topics of more immediate importance.

⁂

There are Farmer John's potatoes, for instance. Farmer John sold his potatoes in the summer, long before they were ready to be gathered in. Now that they are ready the Government has taken nearly all his "hands," and there is hardly anyone to collect the goods for delivery. Who is to bear the loss on the deal, Farmer John, or the purchaser, or the Government? The question has become so acute that a day or so ago two men actually came to blows about it.

⁂

Then there is the question of the day nursery at the end of the village. It being necessary to have a responsible lady in charge, the vicar appointed his sister to the post. But it is now observed that, doubtless by some oversight of the last generation, the vicar's sister has remained unmarried, and it is suggested that perhaps a married woman with children of her own would do the necessary work more efficiently. On the other hand, if an experienced matron is appointed she will require a salary, whereas the vicar's sister will do the job for nothing as part of the good works to which her life is devoted. Unfortunately one of the parish councillors has committed himself to the regrettable statement that what you get for nothing in this world is generally worth what you gave for it. The controversy shows signs of becoming acutely personal, and yet Lloyd George goes on talking about the war as if nothing else mattered.

COULDN'T POSSIBLY FIND A "BETTER 'OLE"!

⁂

Another epoch-making event in this village is the curate's Farthing Fund. There seems to be no mention of it in the London papers, yet from information I have been able to gather it is clearly regarded in the village as a matter of national importance. The idea is that anyone who gets any farthings should hand them to the curate, and thus help to form a fund which will later on be presented to the Government as a contribution towards the liquidation of the national debt. I think Lord Leverhulme has estimated that at the end of the war (which is presumably near) our national debt will be somewhere in the region of ten thousands of millions of pounds sterling. So that it seems to me that the curate's Farthing Fund has not been started a moment too soon.

⁂

Then there is the tremendous controversy that has grown up

(*Continued on page 564*)

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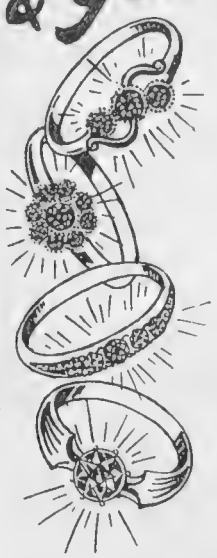

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"THE PARISH PUMP" (*concluded*)

in respect of a lady whom I will call Mrs. Smith. For a long time Mrs. Smith has been doing useful war-work in a small way, knitting woollen comforts for soldiers, and even serving as a volunteer in a military canteen, and she is very properly proud of her record. Mrs. Smith was, unfortunately, drawn into an argument with Mrs. Brown on the subject of war-work, and mentioned all her achievements in that respect in full detail and in their right order. Mrs. Brown retorted (in the presence of witnesses, mark you!) that Mrs. Smith seemed to regard this as *her* war.

❋

MRS. SMITH has consulted her friends and the irresistible conclusion to which they have all come is that Mrs. Brown has deliberately and maliciously accused Mrs. Smith of having started the war. At the present moment, when the papers are full of inquiries as to where the guilt for this awful catastrophe should be placed, Mrs. Smith naturally feels her position most keenly. She is consulting her solicitor on the matter, as she is excusably anxious to establish her innocence of the atrocious charge as clearly and as quickly as possible. As is usual in all great controversies, both ladies concerned have their partisans. On the one side it is whispered that Mrs. Smith ought to be interned; and on the other side it is alleged that Mrs. Brown has gone a bit too far this time, and will probably get six months. The London papers are strangely silent about this tremendous dispute while they give the best part of a column to the news that on the western front there is nothing to report. It is a strange world.

ARNOLD GOLSWORTHY.

GETTING ON WITH THE WAR

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The Duchess assured me kindly, "You won't have a thing to do
"But smoke your beloved **Abdullas**, and watch us go romping through."

Alas! for our hard-worked Peerage—stage fright with an icy grip
Had fastened on "Beau" and "Beauty," and frozen each painted lip;
The Hero addressed me wildly—"I can't hear a single word!"—
And clung to the "wings" for succour whenever a hitch occurred.

The Stalls—at a modest fiver—grew bored by my dulcet tones,
The Boxes—each fifty guineas—soon greeted my voice with groans—
Undaunted by heartless titters, I whispered each leading cue
And simplified things by reading the whole of the Third Act through.

When the Curtain shut out our audience I wilted, weary and hoarse,
But the Duchess hissed, "'Twas our Prompter who murdered the Play, of course."
So I slunk through the Stage-door swiftly, and remembered with sudden zest
I had time—after four long hours—to savour **Abdulla's Best.**

ABDULLA
THE STAR TURN ALWAYS

The "Proms." Again

War may come and peace may go, but the "Proms." bid fair to go on for ever. Not quite literally, alas! But near enough. Really, one wonders what the musical public would do without them. They are the most representative concerts we have; they are, the cinema excepted, the cheapest entertainment in London. For absolute perfection one ought to be able to sit at small tables and drink beer or coffee on the ground-floor instead of promenading—especially as one does not, in fact, promenade there at all, but stands as still as possible. Perhaps, some day, when licensing laws become less pedantic and English habits more gregarious, we may see something of the kind. I hope so. The "Proms." are not intellectual; they neither demand nor receive the serious attention due to a Symphony Concert. They simply cry aloud for beer—always music's staunchest ally—like the *Concerts Touche* in Paris or innumerable concerts in another country that it were wiser to leave unnamed.

To be frank, the level of this year's programmes does not seem to be quite up to the standard we have learned to expect. There is all the difference in the world between catholic taste and bad taste. The motto of the "Proms." should be: "The best examples of genuine music of all kinds." This most certainly would not include, for instance, the Intermezzo from *Cavalleria Rusticana*, the worst music in the opera, and very poor, insincere music, anyhow. Far better to have had a Strauss waltz.

The Intermezzo sounded peculiarly horrible, because it immediately preceded George Butterworth's "Shropshire Lad," a remarkably genuine and poetical piece of music. As all his friends knew, Butterworth had great talent. Now that he is dead perhaps the public will be allowed to learn something about it. In England it seems necessary for an artist to get his name into the papers before the ordinary person takes any notice of his art at all. And the best, perhaps the only, way for a sensitive and sincere man to accomplish this is by dying. Would Rupert Brooke, alive, have won his present fame? Had Granados not been drowned in the *Sussex* would his Spanish dances have been played at a "Prom." this summer? Yet everybody who was anybody in these matters knew all about Granados and Rupert Brooke and Butterworth even before the war. I write "even" because the memory seems to find a difficulty in going back so far. Otherwise how could Butterworth's music have been labelled "First London Performance"? It was produced at the Queen's Hall at a concert organised by F. B. Ellis, a well-known figure in the musical world, in the spring of 1914. Poor Ellis is dead, too. He might surely be allotted some share of our belated post-mortem remembrance. F. T.

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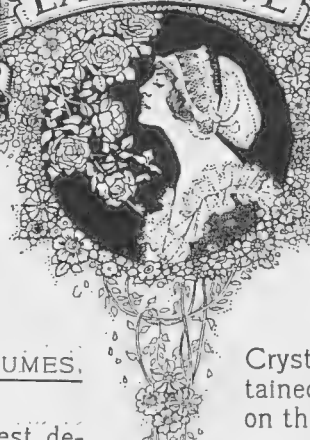

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Books *of the* Week

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THERE must be times in France when it is difficult to keep one's sense of humour, just as there must be times when only a keen sense of humour keeps a man fit to fight. And what you may call the Bairnsfather atmosphere is surely one of the outstanding features of this war. Take, for instance, Mr. Cecil Summers' book, *Temporary Heroes* (Lane: 3*s.* 6*d.* net). True, there are passages in the Jock Lieutenant's letters home, to the only Phyllis who matters, which do not hide the stark horror of things, but in the main they show you the ridiculous business that war is. The letters, indeed, are a sort of running commentary on Bairnsfather. There is the Bairnsfather mud and the Bairnsfather Red Hat. Lieut. Thomas is constantly discovering the fact that "this is a terrible war," but not so much on account of Fritz's activities as for such enormities as Headquarters' refusal to allow him to wear red tabs while attached to its important self, or the smashing of a precious bottle of wine at the worst possible moment. Poor Thomas was "out" early in the war, and remained till the Somme, when he received a comfortable "blighty." His letters to Phyllis are some of the most interesting and amusing that have appeared since the beginning of the war. And the illustrations! No wonder Thomas was taken on at Brigade Headquarters. They could hardly have helped themselves. He is almost as efficient as an artist as he was on the great court-martial, which is so funnily described. The ultimate fate of the three hens, which were the cause of this particular court-martial, is, perhaps, the most delightful thing in a most delightful book.

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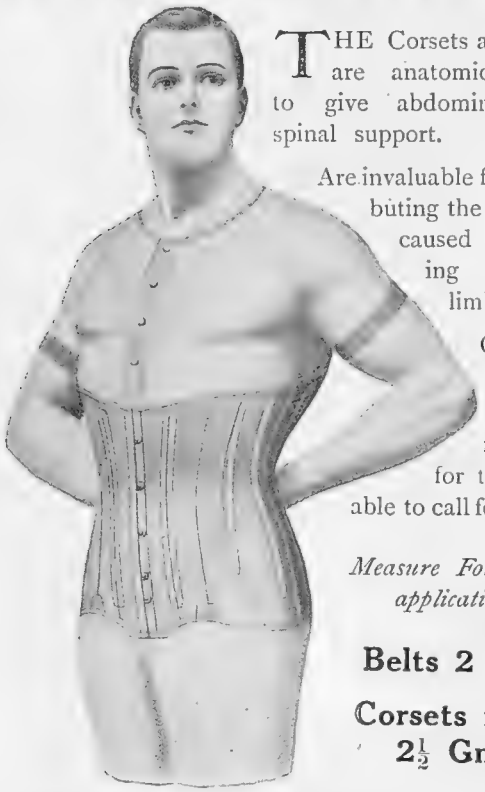

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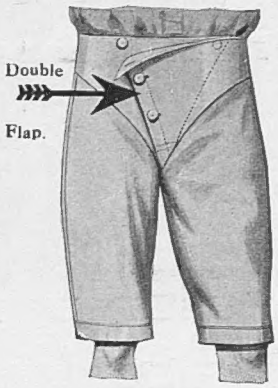

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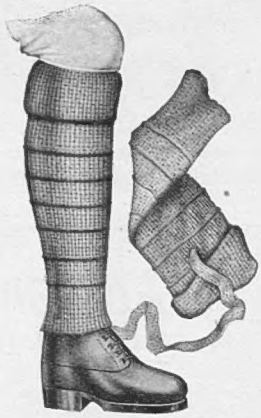

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PETROL POOLS AND PRICES

Pity the Poor Pool!

THE Petroleum Pool Board seems to be doing itself remarkably well. It has been called upon under the new Government marine insurance scheme to increase its rate of insurance upon tankers, from 4 per cent. to 18 per cent. The *Autocar*, taking what appears to be a fair average case, has worked it out that, on this case, the importers have to pay an additional £26,740. Being a Pool Board, and, therefore, in the position of the most undiluted of trusts, the importers increase the price to the consumer (what there is left of him) by 8½*d.* per gallon, which, in the case under notice, means, if all the contents of the tanker were sold at 8½*d.* per gallon extra, that the importers would clear £61,093!

* * *

Insurance Profits

Do not, however, judge the Pool Board too harshly. I do not know what percentage of its profits are annexed by the State. Moreover, a considerable proportion of the contents of the tanker in question may represent contract deliveries at old prices. These contracts cannot be varied. What the Pool Board seems to be doing is to make the non-contract portion of the cargo carry a sufficiently increased price to the consumer to cover the whole extra cost. We must, therefore, in justice to the trustified importers, assume that they are content with the margin of profit at present available (if it is a nice healthy margin, giving plenty of reserve for a rainy day, I can readily imagine they are fairly satisfied to carry on with it), and are not worrying about immediate things; but knowing the attitude of mind of these jolly fellows as indicated by past words and actions, I feel rather inclined to the view that, as the contracts are completed, the 8½*d.* per gallon extra now imposed upon non-contract fuel will not be reduced, but will go on to the extra bulk represented by said completed contracts, until we reach the point where the whole cargo carries the extra 8½*d.* and the importers are netting the difference between £26,740 which they pay in extra insurance and the £61,093 which the increase by 8½*d.* per gallon represents when applied to the total quantity of

(Continued on page 574)

HEREKINO!

Which is not a New Zealand equivalent for "Banzai" or "Hoo-roo," but the name of a gorge "negotiated" during a week or more of touring in New Zealand. Thirty-five motor vehicles of various sorts conveyed members of the New Zealand Government and others on this trip of investigation, out of which an eight-year-old 38 h.p. Daimler emerged covered with mud and top honours for reliability and speed. Twenty-six man-power helping the horse-power out of a bog

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MOTOR NOTES (concluded)

fuel in the typical tanker we are dealing with.

* * *

The Power to Exploit

Of course, the natural mind of the consumer stands up shrieking against the enormity of an imposition of this kind and these dimensions ; but so long as we are content to be dominated by a combine in fuel all the shrieking in the world will not alter things. The petrol companies are quite frank in their attitude. Before the war they gave us the straight tip that they were in business for every penny they could get out of it. National necessity and matters of that kind do not affect the broad business position ; it only supplies the business organisation with a stronger weapon for use in the exploitation of the market. Petrol companies are not peculiar in the exercise of the power of exploitation they possess ; they merely happen to be in a rather stronger position than some other companies, and, knowing their strength, have, in the past, not hesitated to tell us exactly what they were going to do.

* * *

4s. 5½d. Per Gallon!

The net result is petrol at 4*s.* 5½*d.* per gallon, just because that is the price which the market, in its dire extremity (an extremity mainly due to the absolute necessity for motor fuel in order to carry on what is principally work of national importance) will pay. The business of a trust is always to find the market's price limit and to touch it as quickly as possible. Cost of production and distribution play no particular part in the scheme of market prices since competition is eliminated. We have no appeal and no remedy short of the introduction of a competitive factor or—State control of supply. The competitive factor is a possibility of the future when our research committees get a move on. Benzol is one such likely competitive factor, and the great joke about it is that the State has already intimated its decision to take over the supply of benzol and—hand its distribution over to a petrol company ! Truly we are a very great people.

* * *

Tips for Taxis

A new regulation for taxi-cabs is in operation. Aforetime, unless the cab happened to be standing on a rank, or, when hailed, stopped to parley, you couldn't insist upon hiring it. The driver might be passing with his flag up, but that would not be taken as evidence of refusal to accept a fare, because he might be going to keep an appointment, or going home. But, probably as a result of the protest sent by Sir T. Vansittart Bowater to the Chief of Police, it is now ruled that the taxi-man is plying for hire if his flag is up and not covered. In future he has to cover that flag with a little cap if he wants to turn down an unlikely looking "fare." If he forgets to do so, you can have him either to carry you or—as a police court case ! What essential difference that will make I do not see. Taxi's missus can always make a little cap which is so easy to put on or pull off. Seems there's no escape. We shall have to put up with it for the duration.

* * *

A Fine Effort

The balance-sheet of the B.S.A. employees war fund, dating from September 4, 1914, to June 30, 1917, shows the very handsome income of £23,807 12*s.* 9*d.* Of this sum, which is, of course, exclusive of the amount subscribed by the company, £17,501 17*s.* 6*d.* has been distributed (*a*) to dependents of B.S.A. employees serving with the colours (£10,097 19*s.* 11*d.*) and (*b*) to various war charities and commendable undertakings (£7,403 17*s.* 7*d.*). The remainder is in war loan. A very fine effort indeed in the best (as well as the most urgent) of causes.

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